

# **Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy for Local Innovation Platforms Nile Basin Development Challenge**

**Beth Cullen  
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This document outlines a tentative strategy for monitoring and evaluating the activities of the local innovation platforms. Monitoring and evaluation is an essential part of the platform process and can help to encourage reflection and learning among platform members. M&E exercises will also help to Innovation Platform (IP) members and NBDC researchers to keep the project on track by enabling us to determine whether the resources we have are sufficient, to identify challenges and opportunities, and to check whether activities are going according to plan. The information will also serve as a basis for evaluating the impact of platform activities.

## **Process**

Two parallel M&E processes will take place- one at platform level to monitor impact of platform meetings and one at farmer level to monitor impact of platform activities on the ground, as well as communication and coordination between stakeholders at different levels.

## **Indicators**

- Gender: how many men/women are involved and what are their roles? (Both at IP level and farmer level)
- Stakeholder participation in meetings, who attends, how often, is attendance regular?
- Farmer participation: how many are participating, who are they, are they representative of different wealth categories, ages, gender, and activities are they undertaking?
- What activities are taking place (meetings and implementation), where and how often?
- Significant changes (big and small, positive and negative) that have been noticed by farmers and IP members both in terms of action and process/communication?
- Benefits of the activities for both farmers and other IP members?
- Problems with the activities/meetings- gaps/requirements?
- Interactions/communication between stakeholders: how often are participants communicating? Who is communicating with whom? How and where? Why are they communicating? What are the benefits/drawbacks?
- Has collective action around NRM issues increased?
- Are community members better supported by development actors involved in the IP's?

These indicators have been identified by NBDC researchers involved in IP facilitation. However, they should be discussed with IP members and adjusted as necessary. It is important that the indicators are understood by the platform participants, and are meaningful/useful to them, as well as NBDC researchers.

## **Methods of data collection**

Monitoring should be process light and able to be done as part of regular IP activities. The suggested methods are as follows (these can be added to or amended as the IP's progress):

- Regular reporting by farmers and IP members (using format provided)
- Interviews by ILRI/IWMI staff
- Observation
- Documentation and analysis of important incidents
- Participatory photography (see guide)
- Minutes or notes from meetings

## **Roles and responsibilities**

- Platform members to assign an 'M&E champion' to oversee M&E activities, motivate people, support the collection of stories and photographs and ensure that these are organized and reported at IP meetings
- Farmers to be given an active role through participatory photography (see guide) and note taking depending on literacy levels
- M&E Champion to document observations, and to undertake reporting with farmers (who cannot fill in reporting format themselves)
- IP members to individually complete reporting format at the end of every meeting
- Feedback from both farmer and IP members to be reported to IP's and discussed
- Notes should be made about any meeting which takes place regarding the project activities
- Follow up interviews by ILRI/IWMI researchers

## **Resources**

- Notebooks and pens
- Reporting format
- Cameras and camera guide
- (Per diems?)

## **Reporting period**

- M&E forms should be filled by platform members at the end of every meeting
- M&E forms should be completed by farmers involved in piloted activities on a regular basis (monthly) and supported by the 'M&E champion'
- Photographs should be taken on a monthly basis and efforts made to ensure that important activities are documented. These photographs should be shown to IP members and used for discussion and reflection on the pilot activities.
- M&E Champion to make notes and observations after their interactions with farmers about progress of activities
- Time should be allocated in each of the IP meetings for M&E champion to feed back results to IP members so they can be discussed and decisions taken about necessary actions to be taken. This is also a way of verifying the stories/ reports and ensuring that feedback influences action.

- ILRI/IWMI researchers will collect M&E forms (of both IP members and farmers) at every IP meeting
- ILRI/IWMI researchers will conduct follow up interviews at regular intervals
- An evaluation exercise will take place once the Innovation Fund money has been spent, at the end of December 2012

### **Potential benefits of M&E approach**

Monitoring and Evaluation can be undertaken by both farmers and DA's and used to build capacity. If undertaken as a collaborative exercise it can help to enhance communication between actors and as such could help to address the lack of farmer and DA participation in planning and decision making in other forums.

M&E exercises can be used to assess the understanding of the platform mechanism at farmer level, as there are concerns that the innovation platform process has not been well understood by participating farmers.

M&E processes can be used to identify gaps in the activities, provoke discussion about how to address these issues within the platform and identify solutions.

Data generated by M&E activities can be used to raise awareness of the IP activities, and may help to encourage innovation, as well as vertical and horizontal communication. For example, photo documentation, stories from reports and video interviews can be made into short digital stories in each of the sites to map progress and outcomes. These can be shared with broader community in each of the sites and IP's in other sites to create information sharing mechanisms and feedback loops. They can also be used to produce key messages to be shared with national level decision makers.